

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005. A Petition for Extension of Time is submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee. No fee is due for the addition of new claims.

I. Summary of Examiner's Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005, Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-33 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005, Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and as being indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 22-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Meltzer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,226,675, hereafter Meltzer). Claims 6, 8, 9, 16, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer in view of Borwankar (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,693). Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer and Borwankar, in view of Pinard et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,230,287, hereafter Pinard). Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer and Borwankar, in view of Laura Gibbons Paul ("RosettaNet: Teaching business to work together", www.developer.com/xml/article.php/616641, hereafter Paul).

II. Summary of Applicant's Amendment

The present Response amends Claims 1 and 11; cancels Claims 21, 25-27, 29, 32 and 33; and adds new Claims 34-39 leaving for the Examiner's present consideration Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-20, 22-24, 28, 30, 31 and 34-39. Reconsideration of the Application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicant respectfully reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented claims or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005, Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and as being indefinite

for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, the present Response amends Claims 1 and 11 as shown above to more clearly define the embodiments therein. Claims 21, 25-27, 29, 32 and 33 have been canceled, rendering moot the rejection of these claims. Applicant respectfully submits that each of remaining Claims 1 and 11, together with Claims 2, 4-10, 14-20, 22-24, 28, 30 and 31 dependent therefrom, now conform to the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

IV. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

In the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005, Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 22-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Meltzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,226,675).

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended by the current Response to more clearly define the embodiment therein. As amended, Claim 1 defines:

1. *(Currently Amended) A conversation manager executing on an intermediate collaboration server for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:*

a conversation initiation logic that initiates a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both a routing information and a business protocol used by a participant in said conversation, and wherein the routing information is specified by the participant in a header of the extensible protocol;

a participation registration logic that registers said participants in said conversation;

a conversation repository that stores conversation management data, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants;

a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol;

a plurality of decoders that identify protocol-specific headers in the messages and assign the messages to an appropriate business protocol handler; and

a transport configured to accept messages from the participants using any of the different business protocols, identify the business protocol being used, and invoke one or more of said plurality of decoders to communicate the messages between a first participant using a first protocol, and a second participant using a second protocol.

Claim 1, as currently amended, defines a conversation manager, wherein the routing information is specified by the participant in a header of the extensible protocol. The conversation manager further comprises a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol; a plurality of decoders that identify protocol-specific headers in the messages and assign the messages to an appropriate business protocol handler; and a transport configured to accept messages from the participants using any of the different business protocols, identify the business protocol being used, and invoke one or more of said plurality of decoders to communicate the messages between a first participant and a second participant. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are not disclosed by the cited references.

The advantages of the embodiment defined by Claim 1 include that it allows for conversational communication between collaboration participants that utilize different business protocols. When the system receives a message on a particular business protocol (for example at a particular URL), then it automatically knows which collaboration space or conversation the message should go to, and which business protocol is being used by the participant. With this information, the system can invoke the necessary decoders and business protocol handlers to handle the message. The net result is that a participant can use any business protocol to communicate with another participant, as long as the system includes an appropriate business protocol handler.

Meltzer discloses a participant server which processes documents for commerce in trading partner networks. As disclosed by Meltzer, business interface definitions (BIDs), which describe the documents to be exchanged, are communicated to members of the network. The business interface definitions tell potential trading partners the services the company offers and the documents to use when communicating with such services. (Column 2, Lines 34-48). A participant node includes resources for translating at least a portion of the input document into a format readable according to the variant transaction processing architecture of the transaction process

utilizing the information. (Column 5, Lines 1-5). The use of the participant interface descriptions enables the operation of a market maker node. (Column 6, Lines 29-39). In one example, market maker nodes include resources for registering business interface definitions. Participants are able to send documents to a market maker node, at which the document is identified and routed to an appropriate participant which has registered to receive such documents as input. (Column 9, Lines 35-40). Meltzer further discloses translating the input document into the variant processing architecture of the processes to which the document is to be routed, or routing the input document in its original document format across the network to a remote processing node, or to combinations of such processes. Figure 3 illustrates a participant node that includes a translator module, which provides for translating the incoming document into a form usable by the host transaction system, and vice versa translating the output of host processes into the format of a document which matches the output document form in the business interface definition for transmission to a destination. (Column 7, Lines 6-16; Column 21, Lines 41-54). Meltzer further discloses that, in some instances, the server handles the translation tasks from the format of the documents being received and transmitted, to and from the formats of the respective host systems. Thus, trading partners need only agree on the structure, content and sequencing of the business documents exchanged, and not on the details of application programmer interfaces. (Column 8, Lines 2-12). An of such translation appears to be the of converting XML logic structures into JAVA objects which carry the data of the XML element as well as methods associated with the data such as get and set functions. (Column 23, Lines 38-60).

Applicant respectfully submits that, as described above, Meltzer appears to disclose a system in which a participant communicates with another participant (or group of participants) by a first (sending) participant sending a document *that conforms to the specification or BID* of a second (receiving) participant. The business interface definitions tell potential trading partners which services a participant offers, and which documents to use when communicating with such services. Applicant respectfully submits that this process is different from embodiment defined by Claim 1, wherein a participant is free to use any business protocol that is supported by the collaboration server, and is not restricted to conforming to the protocol of the receiving partner. To accomplish this, the embodiment of Claim 1 comprises *a plurality of business protocol handlers*,

each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, which may be used by any participant to participate in a conversation. Thus, whereas in Meltzer the BID definition allows a customer to place an order by submitting a purchase order, compliant with a document definition published in the BID of a party so as to receive the purchase order; in accordance with the embodiment of Claim 1, a sending participant is not required to be compliant with a recipient's specification.

Furthermore, as described in Meltzer, the routing information appears to be specified by a publish and subscribes means, in that participants send documents to a market maker node, at which the document is identified and *routed to an appropriate participant which has registered to receive such documents as input*. However, in accordance with the embodiment defined by Claim 1, the routing information is specified by the participants in a *header* of the extensible protocol.

Furthermore, as described in Meltzer, each participant node itself appears to include a *translator module*, which provides for translating the incoming document into a form usable by the host transaction system, and vice versa translating the output of host processes into the format of a document (JAVA, XML) which matches the output document form in the business interface definition for transmission to a destination. However, in accordance with the embodiment defined by Claim 1, the collaboration server comprises a *plurality of decoders* that identify protocol-specific headers in the messages and assign the messages to an appropriate business protocol handler. Unlike Meltzer, the use of decoders at the collaboration server relieves the individual participants from having to do any translation themselves. Furthermore, in Meltzer, the translation appears be one of translating between different file formats, such as between XML and JAVA; however in embodiment of Claim 1 the translation is between *different business protocols*.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 11

Claim 11 has been amended similarly to Claim 1 to more clearly define the embodiment therein. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 11, as amended, is likewise neither anticipated

by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 22-33

Claims 21, 25-27, 29, 32 and 33 have been canceled, rendering moot the rejection of these claims.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22-24, 28, 30 and 31 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the amendments to the independent claims, and the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22-24, 28, 30 and 31 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

V. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action mailed August 18, 2005, Claims 6, 8, 9, 16, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,226,675) in view of Borwankar (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,693). Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer and Borwankar, in view of Pinard (U.S. Patent No. 6,230,287). Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer and Borwankar, in view of Paul ("RosettaNet: Teaching business to work together"). Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Borwankar in view of Pinard.

Claims 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the amendments to the independent claims, and the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view, of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that this claim also adds its own limitations which render it patentable in its own right. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

VI. Additional Amendments

Claims 34-39 have been newly added by the present Response. Applicant respectfully requests that new Claims 34-39 be included in the Application, and considered therewith.

VII. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

Enclosed is a PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for extending the time to respond up to and including January 18, 2006.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 18, 2006

By: 

Karl Kenna
Reg. No. 45,445

Customer No.: 23910
FLIESLER MEYER LLP
Four Embarcadero Center, Fourth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-4156
Telephone: (415) 362-3800